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## Crisis in the Falklands

# U.S. envoy works on the Argentines

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BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—Faced with another diplomatic "Mission Impossible," the Reagan administration turned once again last week to its chief Latin American trouble-shooter, Ambassador-at-large Vernon Walters.

Walters, a retired Army general and former No. 2 man in the Central Intelligence Agency, met secretly with Argentina's military rulers here to try to thaw relations put on ice because of the Falklands Islands dispute between Argentina and Britain, with the U.S. backing Britain, diplomatic sources said.

During a two-day stay he met with the three members of the ruling military junta, including President Leopoldo Galtieri, and other officers of the Argentine high command, the sources said.

WALTERS REPORTEDLY tried to find a starting point for mending fences between the two countries and warned that only through Washington could the British hard-line position be softened.

The military leaders retorted that the U.S. should re-examine its support for Britain and urged that the Reagan administration pressure its ally into calling off its fleet and ceasing to threaten use of force, the sources said. Sent as a personal envoy of President Reagan, Walters was making the first high-level U.S. diplomatic initiative in the crisis since Secretary of State Alexander Haig's peace efforts failed last month.

Walters, a personal friend of generals and military strongmen in much of Latin America, was sent because of Argentine rebuffs of the U.S. Embassy here after the administration announced its support for Britain, the sources said.

SINCE THEN, U.S. Ambassador Harry Schlaudemann, a respected career diplomat, has been virtually cut off from all top-level contact with Argentine authorities, the sources said.

mand, resentful of U.S. economic sanctions against Argentina, have all but made Schlaudemann and Haig *personas non grata* here, the sources said.

"They (the Argentine generals) tend to personalize their animosities," one source said.

Argentina has nonetheless made clear to the U.S., privately and through public statements by top officials, that it "doesn't want this (animosity) to go too far," the source said.

THE COUNTRIES have not broken off formal diplomatic relations, though the Argentine ambassador to Washington has also received the cold shoulder from U.S. officials, other sources said.

Similarly, Argentina has not reciprocated with sanctions of its own against the U.S., mostly because the administration's economic measures are seen as innocuous here and have no serious effect on the two countries' trade relationship.

There has been some high-level disagreement within the administration as to the wisdom of the sanctions, which despite their mildness have aroused indignant criticism in Latin America, sources said.

Walters accompanied Haig on his last peace-seeking trip to Argentina last month, though he left a day before the secretary for another diplomatic mission in El Salvador, the sources said.

"THEY BROUGHT him along because he knew some of these guys and he is friendly with generals and military men all over the continent," said one source. "He knows how to talk to them."

Walters said in Washington earlier in the week that the war between Britain and Argentina is "idiotic" and a result of "machismo" displayed by two countries with more similarities than differences.

In early March it was disclosed that Walters had a secret four-hour meeting with Cuban President Fidel Castro in Havana to discuss increasingly hostile relations between the U.S. and Cuba.